

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
JULY 16, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.

NOTICE OF MEETING:

TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

The special meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Thursday, July 16 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via ZOOM pursuant to the notice sent to each member.

Mrs. Minneci called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m. and stated thank you for your patience

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Dr. Guy Francis, Mrs. Sherry Higgins, Mr. Ronnie McDowell, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Dr. Kalisha Morgan, Mr. Vito Nufrio, Mrs. Linda Richardson, Mrs. Kim Ruiz

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Mr. Gregory Tatum, Mr. Gerry Benaquista, Mrs. Moses, Mr. Manuel Vieira, Mrs. Kim Conti, Mrs. Ann Hart, Mr. Craig Wojcik, Mr. Barry Loessel, Mrs. Maureen Guilfoyle, Mrs. Sandra Paul, Ms. Gail Calderone, Mr. Aldo Marsillo, Mr. Christopher Carew

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Lester Taylor, Esq.

Mr. McDowell led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Vieira read the statement required under the “Open Public Meetings Act”, a copy of which is on file in the office of the Board Secretary.

Mrs. Minneci read the District’s mission statement.

Mrs. Minneci stated after executive session we will have the Superintendent’s overview and comments from the public.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mr. Nufrio, seconded by Mrs. Richardson, that the Board go into Executive Session at 7:17 p.m. to discuss the following subject matters without the presence of the public in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b.

- Matters rendered confidential by state or federal law.
- Matters which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy.

- Matters involving collective bargaining agreement negotiations and/or the negotiations of terms and conditions of employment.
- Matters concerning protecting the safety and property of the public.
- Pending or anticipated litigation, contract negotiation and matters falling under the attorney-client privilege.
- Matters involving employees and terms of their employment and contract.
- Information concerning re-opening of schools.

Please take notice that minutes will be taken of the discussion conducted during the executive session and the Board will disclose the minutes of the executive session when the disclosure will not result in unwarranted invasion of individual privacy or prejudice to the best interests of the Board of Education and provided that such disclosure does not violate federal, state or local statutes and does not fall within the attorney/client privilege.

Action may be taken when the Board reconvenes in public session.

Mrs. Higgins did not have audio at time of vote.

AYE: Dr. Francis, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio,
Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 9:05 p.m.

Mrs. Minneci stated thank you everyone for your patience.

Mr. Tatum stated we have talked a lot about the plans for the possible return to school in September. Next week, you will expect to hear some presentations from the committees that have been functional within the district for the last few months.

We had a school closing committee that completed their task but there are other committees – redevelopment design, sanitation and safety and the social and emotional learning committees and have meeting frequently throughout the course of the last few weeks. Most of the committees have completed their work and made recommendations. They will be present next week to present some of the issues that they have been working on to the public and the Board.

One of the things that I did talk to the Board and members of the administration, the possible model that you will be hearing about next week. One of them is a virtual model – which is 5 days out of school and some people can elect to do that. There was a brief survey put out a week or so ago with the intention to determine how many people would be interested in that particular model. The response was great enough for us to develop a plan that talks about a virtual concept. You will hear more about that next week also. Also a hybrid program which is person to person and virtual; that would include two days in school work and three days of

virtual work outside of school. Then there is a person-to-person which is four days a week in a building, one day of deep cleaning and also a modified schedule.

The other thing we talked about during the pandemic are the possibility of some reorganization of the district where students would be able to attend schools closer to where they live as opposed to having to travel on buses.

Anything we have been discussing is based upon our response to all of terms that have been brought to our attention based upon the committees based upon the input they received from parents and our teaching staff. Our next goal is to maintain a true focus and then present that to our community and come back together and have another situation where we will be meeting. I believe next Thursday there will be Q and A discussion about all of the concerns and all of our committees will be available.

Mrs. Moses stated the committee that will be presented on the 23rd will be the social emotional learning which pertains to the wellness of our students and their families.

Mr. Tatum stated all those are the issues that we are undertaking right now. More and more information is coming in our direction. Again, things change almost on a daily basis. One example of that is the actually wearing a mask in the classroom – that is something that guidelines have changed on – wearing masks on buses. A greater number of restrictions on that but also the ability to put more kids on a school bus. The information we have been getting here is that many parents don't feel comfortable with putting children on buses. So how do we as a district and a community and as a Board attend to the multiple needs of all of our students, families and staff members so that is the purpose of tonight's meeting.

The purpose of tonight's meeting was not to finalize a plan that was misunderstood. My purpose was to have a meeting with the Board of Education to ensure that they know all of what is on the table, make recommendations, entertain suggestions that they may have and then a presentation that will happen next Tuesday.

That is the information I wanted to share tonight.

Mrs. Minneci asked the Board if they had any questions or comments. No questions/comments were made.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Dr. Barbara Sieder stated I taught online for many years. How many of the people that talked about this model have experienced with students teaching online because the evidence is very poor for college students so it seems to me you can't expect much success with high school or grammar school students. Second there is another model you can adapt and that is where you have face-to-face and you also have synchronous learning online not pure virtual. What kind of accommodations are you going to make to be within the law for students who have disabilities?

Veronika Bevaletta stated with respect to hybrid learning – for specific grades, across the board and how is the district envisioning that? In person teaching, then having to teach the kids at home virtually, how will you take into consideration the workload of the teachers?

Mrs. Butts stated I have a concern about the busing. My son is coming from Franklin, he wouldn't qualify for a bus due to the change in the mileage so it puts my son along with other students on this side of Town at a disadvantage of getting transportation if we do go back into the building for this upcoming school year. I am going to need help with that and that is my concern. I have been trying to attend the meetings throughout the last school year but they go so late into the evening, I had to go to work. This is my first opportunity to let you know that is a real concern for a lot of parents on this side of Town. When parents have concerns and want to address the Board members, how are we supposed to contact them? How can we let our concerns be known? Can we email you? Mrs. Minneci stated you can email Mr. Tatum, Mrs. Moses or Mr. Benaquista. Mrs. Butts stated not those people, for the Board members so they can hear from the parents. Mrs. Minneci stated we also have our email addresses on the district website.

Maria Serrano Kruger stated I would like the names and qualifications of the committee members to be released along with the plans. I would like to know how the committee members were selected. I think it is important. I would like to know what their qualifications are. Do we have an epidemiologist on one of these committees? Do we have representations from custodians, parents, healthcare workers, etc.? Also I would like to know if there will be another survey to the community members before proposing any final plans. I know many other districts have disseminated very thorough and detailed and thoughtful surveys for the community members to complete. I would like an explanation as to what the training will be for the online model. I think we all have acknowledged that the fourth quarter was a little bit lacking and I think that training for the teachers would possibly rectify that. I would like to emphasize in my opinion there must be a face-to-face component which was not available to the children that went to Jefferson because the principal had some concerns about the teachers' safety – she expressed that to me. Also I want to ensure that there continues to be a focus on children that are in GT and children that may qualify for advance classes. I would like to ensure that their academic life is not compromised. Equally, I would like to ensure that the social, emotional plans really take into account feedback from the community. My understanding is that many children have suffered from a psycho/social perspective. Again, I have no idea how these committees are comprised and I think it is important that there be transparency about that.

Ann Margaret Shannon stated President of UTEA. The UTEA expects that the Board's plans will follow all CDC requirements to extreme and not cut corners. We would expect six feet between students in classrooms, lunchrooms, hallways, buses, etc. and we do expect an isolation room in our schools. I was wondering if you were going to hire more nurses so that we can accommodate both the nurses office and the isolation rooms and any of the screening that need to be done to the students and visitors.

Regarding the virtual academy, I'm wondering when it is going to be explained to the UTEA members as to the opportunities that might be out there for them for the people that are unable to return to school. We are wondering if you are going to guarantee the half-size classes,

provide PPE and disinfecting wipes in the classrooms. Also there are a number of classrooms that don't have windows and we want to make sure that we are not using those classrooms or classrooms where the windows might have issues being opened.

Grades 6-12 – we are hoping that you would consider grouping kids in clusters and then have the teachers change rooms, instead of the kids. Are you going to stagger opening and closing times? Are you going to do half days to avoid crowded cafeterias? For substitutes, are you ready to replace staff that unfortunately might be exposed to and go into quarantine? Finally, 900 UTEA members, we take care of over 7,000 children so we do want this done the right way and we are asking that the UTEA leadership be consulted before any other plans are approved by the Board.

A. Rodriguez stated my concern is if we go to a hybrid or mostly virtual model, it has been considered the counseling we needed for children who are suffering from the lack of social contact. My child did have some difficulty with that during the lockdown. I would hope that they would consider, in some way, how they can make up that lack of social contact. Even during hybrid model, they are spending only two days in schools that means most of their time they are being isolated from the rest of their community. I wanted to know if that would be considered and if there would be some way of them being in contact with counseling or something.

Patrick Brooks stated thank you for hearing us. We appreciate your time and efforts. One of the things and I have talked with Mr. Tatum numerous times is communication is paramount. Not just with the parents but you guys to us. Maybe in the future, Board President and Board members, meetings like this where you shut out the public for the purpose of your private meeting which is respectable, it should be done on your own time instead of having us sit here for two hours and Mr. Tatum come on afterwards telling us what you guys are going to speak about and what you are not going to speak about. Most of us I think after hearing some of the parents and myself, were all thinking that we were going to hear about the plan come the fall. We appreciate you wanting our input and we respect that you are taking our input in order to be able to find out what you are going to do, how you are going to implement it, it is all great. I'm just saying in terms of maybe in the future just say you are posting something in the Town Hall, if they request it and you want to be a part of it, that is great instead of word of mouth going through the Town how a meeting is going to come about. Meetings like this where we have to sit around for 2.5 hours while you guys meet behind closed doors and come back and hoping some people fall off because they get board of waiting is maybe not the best option. Maybe do it on different time and then come back and say this is what we are going to do. Like a Town Hall and say this is what we want to do, open it to the public, this is what we spoke about.

Most of the parents that have come on earlier have asked a lot of the questions that I was hoping to ask and I thank you all parents for asking those questions. But I seriously would like you to think about the ideas of the child that is entering the high school with a preexisting condition. Not just virtual, but something that is more two way – more reciprocal, something that is not just posted online and saying this is your homework for today. If my son has a question, whether he is in 6th grade or in high school, instead of raising their hand they can hit “waiving hand” if they have a question and they can be called on and talked to and talk through

it. This way it is more reciprocal. It is something to think about and I know that other states and towns are doing it. It can be done. This is not a re-inventing a wheel. I would like you to please consider it and think about how we are going to do this. Let's do it right and this way we can incorporate as many people as possible without isolating anybody. Thank you for your time and efforts and appreciate anything you can do to help us out.

Nellis Regis-Darby stated other parents talked about virtual learning and I think moving forward if we are going to be doing some kind of hybrid or model plan A or plan B that we should really think about how important it is to have synchronous and asynchronous learning. I think this is my fourth time mentioning this at the Board meetings. Just talking to the students and getting feedback from them, there was not a lot of synchronous learning. It would be really important for the students to be able to have that interaction with their teachers. I think it is a big thing for the Board to have that conversation with the UTEA because that is where the issues are coming from. As we move forward, if that conversation can start happening with the UTEA then maybe we would get better results where we would see more synchronous and asynchronous learning for our students.

Anne Buggy stated I would like to thank all the people working on this since March. I was on that committee for the closing of schools and I know how much effort went into just that part and that was the easy part. I appreciate all the work that is being done. There are so many facets to this. It is very daunting to me. Thank you Ann Margaret for bringing up a lot of the things I would probably have said.

Today the Governor spoke about funding from the Cares Act to help fund the measures that may need to be taken in schools. Did our district apply for that? How are we using that money? Will that be transparent? Hopefully we qualified to get that. Also today the Governor had some other speakers on and talking about the digital divide and that there is a big push now to be able to supply whatever is needed for all children to be able to have equal access to do whatever work online might be needed. I think that is a good thing and I think that was one of the problems that we had. Not every child was able to access what they needed right away.

I have been listening to Dr. Fauci and it sounds like what he is saying is that the local prevalence of COVID disease is going to be an integral part of how that particular community should respond. I'm glad that New Jersey is doing much better than other states but how will our district work in conjunction with the local department of health to determine what are current level of virus is on a rolling basis because that is something that could change at any time. Is our health officer involved in this planning of any of these committees that we are doing because he is the one who is getting the things from the State? All the guidelines the State is putting out are going first to the health department. I think that person should be involved in some way.

At 2 p.m. Dr. Fauci was talking with Mark Zuckerberg and he said to the extent possible, we want to try to get the children back into school. I agree with that with certain reservations. He said besides looking at the local level of the virus, he said our first thought has to be for the safety of children and staff. If the virus is very low in the community, we can feel more confident that we can walk into the school and be safe there. If it is not, like Florida, they might

not want to go into real time school. I think we constantly have to be thinking about these things.

Judy Amorosa stated I'm school nurse in another district. I have some concerns because I have family in the schools. Are the nurses being included in the talks? Are they being asked for their opinions on what they think should happen because they are going to be the frontline workers. Are they included on any committees instead of it just being a supervisor? I think it is very important that the nurses collectively are able to voice their concerns. My other concern is personal protective gear, masks, gowns for the nurses, face shields – with all the shortages going around, how are you going to supply the nurses, staff and students with this if you do go back – even if it is just on a hybrid. How are you supplying all this PPE? I'm concerned about how much input will actually be accepted from the public and the nurses. I know it is a very hard job that all of you have to try to come up with all the ideas. I think there are many people that might have some ideas that nobody had thought of. My other concern is speaking of the students maybe not having technology or internet access, there are still a lot of students who may have had that access but wouldn't sign on, wouldn't do the work – I'm concerned about that for the coming year if we end up having to do hybrid or at home because these kids are not going to get all the work done and I'm afraid that everybody is going to have to repeat all of next year. That is one of my concerns. The other gentleman said how other districts are getting a program together so that they can do inclusive classes between kids at home, kids that are actually in the classroom – there has to be some way to make sure that they sign on and that they do the work and not just be given worksheets. There should be some teaching going on. My last thing is it is very hard to hire school nurses and my concern is how are you going to man the isolation rooms. How is one nurse from her regular office, oversee the isolation room and what are the criteria for sending kids home. All of the symptoms of COVID are the same thing as the flu or a cold or even allergies. You need to come up with a criteria on how to send students home.

Kathleen Brunsmeyers stated thank you to all Board members and administration for all the work that you are doing and continue doing. Thank you to the UTEA for all the work they have been doing, especially Ann Margaret. I would like to thank the custodial staff because I know they have a huge job that will continue far beyond any of us expect. Assume job to my fellow colleagues for what we did do in the last months of school. Awesome job for the high school graduation that I was able to livestream and see the pictures and people – that was great. I'm not supposed to say this because it is a public school but I have been praying for every single one of you and I will continue to do so because I can say that. I'm wondering if you, Mr. Tatum, have superintendent meetings where you discuss what the other towns around are doing. I know we are all different but I know I was at a meeting yesterday for something else and there were three different towns that all received the letters from their superintendents with their plan A, B and C going forward for reopening schools. Everything was dependent upon what is happening now, if things get a little better or a little worse. I don't know if you have seen any of those letters from local towns. I know Berkeley Heights, Cranford and Westfield – they all sent out letters. I think that might also be a help. It takes a village and we are in the same County. As far as going forward, I know there were many other school districts who use ZOOM. The Google Meets as far as teaching purposes was very hard to use this past season of virtual learning and instruction. It freezes up a lot, there is a bad echo and I know people who used ZOOM in other school districts didn't have those same problems. I'm not saying it was great but

as you can see now here, it is doing so much better. I don't know if there is a ZOOM license that we can purchase so that we can feel safer using it for the students. This is a comment I would make whether we were virtual, whether COVID was happening or not happening – I have been thinking about it for a long time and now is the perfect time. I would like to know because now the school year is coming to a start now; if going forward at Board meetings, if we could somehow add to the agenda, whether during the prior business period or at the beginning, if we could address the questions that people asked in the meetings. If they can get an answer, if they can get an answer, if they can get addressed at that next meeting. If it is a question that can't be answered for whatever reason, at least communicate that this question was asked at the last meeting, we don't have an answer for you right now. I don't like to see people, especially in our own Town, all being so negative and attacking each other. I know Mr. Tatum you are big on communication and I would like to try to prevent more people from saying we are not getting the answers – we ask the same question month after month and never get an answer. If we could actually have an answer time, as part of the Board meeting, I would like to be more proactive going forward.

Lilliana Almata stated I have two children in the school system. First question is when do you expect the plan to be rolled out to the parents – do you have a deadline to send that out? Second, why was the survey that we were given only from 2nd grade up. I have children in lower grades. The school year is set to begin on September 3rd, are we changing that date due to all the plans that need to be made? In terms of communication, I have been on the FaceBook pages all day today and the communication we got was a small blurb saying that there was going to be a meeting today. I understand that there was a 2-hour period and it was disrespectful to those that were waiting so please keep that in mind. In terms of virtual learning, the different vessels that we are going to be using – can we take into consideration Microsoft Team. My job personally we have a lot of success with that. It is a very useful tool and it is secure. Maybe we can look into that. Live class interaction – call sessions for my children – my older child mostly – was in terms of being given an assignment and they had to do it, there was very little live interaction so maybe we may want to look into that. It is not good at all to not have live interaction. Have we also considered if we are going to be using in-person schooling the building on Burnet? It is not being used for schooling. Are we considering that building for extra room for our kids. Aside from the COVID-19, I know the district was undergoing the change in grades in each school. Obviously it is being pushed back but is that still being considered?

G. Faria stated this is a difficult task for everyone and I recognize that we are all trying to do our best. We need to learn lessons on what went wrong and what didn't. I want to highlight what has been said by a couple of other parents that we have talked about the need for both synchronous and asynchronous. I don't think it is appropriate to have a staff behind a computer for seven hours straight. I do believe that students are required and have the right to have interaction with their teachers. I have two children in the school district. I have a 1st grader that had two Google Meets the entire time on home instruction. One being the last day of school – that is unacceptable. My other child is in 3rd grade and I believe had five Google Meets. Speaking about what works really well – despite that experience, my kids did well and I did sign them up for the summer bridge program. I cannot say enough positive things about the summer bridge program. There is a morning meeting every single time where the kids come in and sets up the tone. The teachers are doing a fabulous job. They are doing social/emotional learning,

asking how they are feeling, having them talk about their experiences, they are doing reading, project based learning. My children are loving the program. The online instruction can work when we do the right thing. The priority of keeping our staff and students safe needs to be first but then the second thing is maybe we need to reexamine how we do our virtual instruction. I want to thank the teachers that are doing the summer program because they are showing us that it can be done and done well. Thank you to them and the school district for offering that program and to really look at what is happening in that program and see if you can make it happen in the fall because I am convinced it is something – we will be virtual and so we need to be ready. This is not an emergency like it was last year. We know better so we should do better.

Yasmine Saber stated a lot of my questions were already asked. Normalcy is great and our children need their education. However, what is concerning me is we are having this meeting in July and it is a virtual ZOOM meeting so it isn't even safe for us to be in the same location face-to-face to have these discussions. What are we going to do five weeks from now when I have to send my 5 and 9 year old to school? My second concern is the virtual learning and the expectations. My daughter who was in 3rd grade had hours of work. I myself had work. When I was done working, I had to work with her. Her Goggle Classroom was utilized as a dumping zone. The work was just assigned; her teacher not once logged in. My daughter actually posted a comment asking the teacher why there was a Google Meet link but we never used it and the teacher ignored that. My son's pre-k teacher was awesome. She did her own thing to find ways to communicate and she called my son and they would have an hour conversation on the phone. I feel like we need to have rules and everyone needs to be on the same page. My other question is how can teachers be in the classroom teaching and also be expected to simultaneously teach virtually? What happens during fire drills or hide in place lockdowns? How are we expecting students to evacuate the buildings while having to keep the distance? I see people online refusing to wear masks. What happens when a visitor wants to enter to pick up their child and they refuse to wear a mask? What happens to classrooms when a teacher gets sick? Is the whole classroom going into isolation quarantine or are we just going to start exposing kids to various substitutes? What happens to teachers, will they get hazard pay if they get sick? Will you supply teachers with masks, soap and sanitizer? My kid is five years old and I tried to have him wear a mask the other day, he dropped it right into the puddle. What happens when kids lose their masks? What is the procedure for sick students? Not necessarily COVID-19, however, the symptoms are very similar and are we going to panic for every sneeze and cough or just isolate the 5-6 year olds and tell them they have to sit in a room alone because they are sick and contagious? Our schools are not just students, we are teachers, custodians, secretaries, security guards, administrators, bus drivers, electrician, the delivery man – we are so many. I'm scared and worried. I have to go to work. I need to work for income for my family but I'm not treating my children's teachers as babysitters. They have to be safe and comfortable to return to the buildings to teach so they properly teach my children.

Jeffrey Monge stated one, this is a very difficult time so appreciate everybody's efforts in working with this situation and like Mrs. Moses always says, "all hands on deck" and it is absolutely needed during these times. Two, communications – this is a monthly issue we talk about. I think there should be some type of communication done on a weekly basis Mr. Tatum. I think the parents and community needs to hear from you more than once a month at Board of Ed meetings especially since they have been reduced from twice a month to once a month.

Surveys are great but the content of those surveys have been limited. There have been surveys before but we don't see any results. What good is taking surveys if the public can't see the results of those surveys. Our special needs children – there needs to be a greater focus on those needs. Maybe there is a survey related just for that to see and hear what the parents of our special needs kids concerns are. More focused effort as it pertains to making them feel comfortable in bringing our most vulnerable kids back to school. Robo calls – parents get robo calls about everything. We don't get robo calls about important meetings like Board of Ed and I think that should be considered. Facilities – there is a lack of capital dollars - \$250,000 – for a huge district like this. We know there has been a lack of dollars in the district. I don't know how we deal with things like lack of dispensers, soap and hand sanitizers in the district. Franklin – where you have windows that are nailed shut. The HVAC is past it's useful life; that is something we need to consider. Money – the Department of Health received over a million dollars from the CARES Act – where is that money. Why isn't that being considered as it pertains to the school. The Board of Education got less money than the Department of Health. Some of that money should be focused on our schools. As it pertains to committees, there is a ton of expertise in the public, from parents, staff – I'm not sure how we are leveraging that. We should have leveraged all of that. I didn't hear anything about committees personally but that is something that we still have time to try to expand. Lastly, as it pertains to virtual instruction, I think the missing piece was Ms. Darby said this – is that the UTEA and there is restrictions in their contract; that is something that needs to be fleshed out – even with a side letter that the contract can be finalized in the short term because we really need everybody to be working on the same page for our staff and children.

Dr. Barbara Sieder stated one of my concerns is the re-segregation of schools. We know when children are racially and economically segregated, they tend to do poorer in poor communities – that needs to be addressed. Already there are very good online teaching resources for faculty to help them develop these courses. One thing you might want to consider is giving teachers CEU's for participating in this. You need to work with the community. Young children usually go to afterschool programs, you don't want to leave 13 year olds alone when you are working. We need to reach out to churches and other places where they might be willing to run programs. Substitute teachers – one of the problems that universities are having is that a number of programs, students have to do hands on and so one thing you might want to consider is to contact these schools and allow their students to do their student teaching online and also provide tutoring for other children. I did not have to, we were given the option of not teaching face-to-face, frankly I think it is a moral obligation to teach face-to-face. My contract, in the fall, I will be teaching two days face-to-face and the other two days I will be doing some asynchronous classes and synchronous classes and I am required to have office hours and I think that is critical so that a student that is having problems can know that this instruction is available at this time. We use ZOOM and you need to get a license. I have friends that use Microsoft Teams and if you have Microsoft Office, I think it is free. Those are just a number of comments that came to mind as I listened to other parents and concerned individuals.

Mrs. Minneci stated I just want to remind everyone that you have one opportunity to make a comment.

Jolie Doyle stated I don't live in Union but have been a teacher there and going into my 25th year. Thank you for all of your considerations and looking forward to seeing what your plan you will be rolling out. I'm a parent in another district and I totally get the concerns of the parents in Union. I do want to mention that we were forced to go into a totally different world and even those that had an understanding of technology, I teach kindergarten and I'm very interactive with my children. I couldn't figure out Google Meets for two months but I was in contact with my parents all the time. I also only had the same ten children every single time. I would call the other ones all the time. I'm not making an excuse, I'm just trying to explain that as a teacher who has been there for a very long time, I think that we were really trying and I don't know one teacher that just said I'm not going to hold any meetings with my kids. I think there was definitely a reason. When you are looking at the plan, I'm worried about teacher absences and staff absences in terms of if we do have symptoms and we do have to quarantine, what happens to any sick days that we might have. You can have 70 days and roll right through those if you have symptoms throughout the year. I would like that addressed; I know a lot of teachers are worried about that.

Natercia Lopes stated I want to thank everybody for the effort. We are living in times that are not even thought about. I appreciate and thank all of you. A lot of people already said a lot of things I wanted to say and I'm waiting for answers someday. I have two kids in school, one was in 6th and the other was in 7th grade. My 6th grader had contact with three teachers during the time he was home and my 7th grade didn't see one teacher. I want to say thank you to the music teacher – he was amazing. Every day my son had a meeting with him every morning. Mr. Singletary is an amazing teacher – my opinion. The other teachers, he had one or two more that tried to make a contact. My 7th grader had one teacher that sent him work not the computer and I knew the way she was doing it but no one else reached out. I don't think that is helpful to the kids and I don't think they are learning what they are supposed to be learning. I am not happy to send my kids back to school. If I know that every kid knows they are supposed to wash their hands, wear a mask – we are all concerned about that. We have to really think hard about this and get everybody involved and see what we can come up with. We want to know that everybody is going to stay alive and every kid we have in our district is going to be alive and don't be one of the percentages – statistic.

Cheryl Fiske stated teacher at Union High School and UTEA Elections Chair. The staff members have a lot of the same health concerns that the parents expressed tonight for their students. The staff members have the same social/emotional concerns about their students and themselves. We like to go to work and see our friends and students. We obviously want to do all those things – we miss our students and friends; but health and safety are number one priority. I do want to mention that we did try our best and a lot of us did a really great job, a lot of us have done things we have never done before and I learned a lot of new things and we did have some training scheduled and then this all happened so some of us were home before we were able to do those trainings. A lot of staff did the best that they could. There is nothing contractual as far as the UTEA and the Board of Ed need to meet and figure out. As far as meetings, it was just training that we need to happen and we are going to have to meet to make sure that safety happens. Synchronous will be figured out but I don't think that will be contractual piece. Safety and social/emotional are definitely a priority for us – amongst ourselves and students.

Mrs. Minneci stated I want to thank the public for their comments. We had a lot of conversations and we hope to answer all your questions next week. There will be presentations and I hope everyone will be with us next week. Thank you for your time and patience with us. I want to thank our teams and committees for all their hard work. It is a daunting task. I appreciate it and the other Board members as well.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mr. Nufrio, seconded by Mrs. Ruiz, that the meeting be adjourned at 10:09 p.m.

AYE: Dr. Francis, Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio,

Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

**MANUEL E. VIEIRA
BOARD SECRETARY**